

**CHARACTERIZATION OF OPTICAL PREFORMS**  
**ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention is directed to a method for characterizing an optical preform. To achieve this, the present invention provides a three-dimensional map of the refractive-index distribution within a boule or an optical preform. The three-dimensional map of the refractive-index distribution allows device manufacturers to better predict the performance of the optical device. The three-dimensional map also allows device manufacturers to determine the best orientation of the preform during device extraction.

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